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TAGS: ETTC KNNP PREL PARM GM IR

SUBJECT: (S) NIAG 7183 - POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE BY GERMAN ENTITIES TO IRAN'S BUSHEHR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

REF: A. STATE 162092

1B. BERLIN 1846
1C. 2006 BERLIN 932

Classified By: EMIN Robert A. Pollard for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Global Affairs officer delivered ref A demarche December 3 to MFA Export Control Division Deputy Director Markus Klinger and MFA Export Control Division Desk Officer Wiebke Wacker. Export Control Division Director Goetz Lingenthal joined the meeting later at Klinger's request. Ref A reports that the German company GERB may be working with Russia's ATOMSTROYEKSPORT on a technical project related to the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) and that German managers affiliated with an unidentified German company are at BNPP supervising the installation of 230-kilovolt cable couplings.

¶2. (S) Klinger expressed surprise at the information contained in ref A, particularly given GERB's previous involvement in the ongoing investigation into the network suspected of transferring German manufactured nuclear dual-use goods via Russia to Iran. (NOTE: As reported ref C, it was a 2005 search of GERB's offices and warehouse facilities in Berlin and Essen that helped authorities identify the 30 firms raided in March 2006 as part of the ongoing investigation. END NOTE.) Klinger said he would alert the appropriate German authorities, including the German Government's interagency export control working group, to discuss next steps. Regarding the information about German citizens providing assistance at BNPP, Klinger agreed that such action likely violated German and EU law, both of which strictly prohibit provision of nuclear-related technical or financial assistance to Iran.

¶3. (S) Lingenthal took issue with inaccuracies in recent press reporting on the ongoing investigation, specifically a November 23 story that appeared in Haaretz. He refuted the story's claim that no German license is required to export nuclear equipment or technical support to Russia, noting that Germany has a compulsory licensing requirement for any non-listed goods that could be used in a civil nuclear program. The requirement, he stated, goes beyond - and reinforces - Germany's catch-all controls.

¶4. (C) As to the likelihood that German authorities might make a presentation at the next Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) Consultative Group meeting, Lingenthal noted that German law prohibits government officials from discussing the details of ongoing criminal investigations with third parties. After prosecutors conclude their investigation, Lingenthal speculated, German authorities might be willing to share information about the case with NSG members.

¶5. (U) Post will report any subsequent German response septel.
TIMKEN JR